

eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5778 of March 21, 1988

Afghanistan Day, 1988

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

March 21 marks the beginning of a new year in a bitter decade for the people of Afghanistan. This may well be a climactic year, and we hope with the Afghan people that it will see the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops and self-determination for the people of Afghanistan. For more than 8 years, the courageous Afghans have suffered and died under the boot of the Soviet Army, which invaded to prop up an illegitimate, unrepresentative, and discredited regime. Let us take this occasion, therefore, to remember the sorrow and to salute the heroism of the Afghan people. They have fought valiantly and against heavy odds to free themselves from the yoke of oppression—from assaults on their liberty, their sovereignty, their dignity, their lives, and their very way of life.

It now appears possible that the tenacity and tremendous sacrifices of the Afghan people will bear fruit in the coming period. The Soviet leadership seems to have finally recognized that the will of the Afghan people to be free cannot be broken. Indications of Soviet willingness to withdraw are an important step forward, though their seriousness can be proven only by the actual, and total, removal of Soviet troops from Afghan soil. To be acceptable, Soviet withdrawal must be complete, irreversible, and verifiable.

Our objectives have been and remain: prompt and complete withdrawal of Soviet forces; restoration of Afghanistan to an independent, nonaligned status; self-determination for the Afghans; and return of refugees in safety and honor. I reiterated this commitment and our support for the brave Afghan Mujahidin in my meeting last November with Afghan Alliance leader Yunis Khalis. I said the same to General Secretary Gorbachev last December.

The United States Government has also repeatedly told the Soviet leadership that any guarantees of noninterference that they and we would undertake must be symmetrical. An agreement at Geneva must not serve as a pretext for continued Soviet military support to the discredited minority Kabul regime. Some 120 members of the United Nations have voted year after year for self-determination in Afghanistan, recognizing that the present government in Kabul does not represent the Afghan people but is a direct result of outside interference. The Mujahidin and the refugees are the true voice of the Afghan people.

I am proud of the strong support provided the Afghan cause over the past 7 years by my Administration, by the United States Congress, and by the American people. Our commitment to the freedom of the Afghan people will not end should the Soviets withdraw. We will join other

nations and international organizations to help the Afghans rebuild their country and their institutions; millions of men, women, and children will be returning to a country devastated by Soviet aggression.

The United States has consistently supported the Afghans in their long ordeal. That support will continue. We will rejoice with them when true peace is achieved and Afghanistan once again takes its rightful place in the community of nations. Let us pray and strive to make sure that this moment of liberation will come soon.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 21, 1988, as Afghanistan Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 21st day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Editorial note: For the President's remarks of Mar. 21, 1988, on signing Proclamation 5778, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 24, p. 369).

Proclamation 5779 of March 23, 1988

Modifying the Implementation of the Generalized System of Preferences and the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

1. I have determined that, under section 802(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 (the Act) (19 U.S.C. 2492(b)), as amended by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-570, 100 Stat. 3207), during the previous year Panama has not cooperated fully with the United States, and has not taken adequate steps on its own, in preventing narcotic and psychotropic drugs and other controlled substances produced or processed, in whole or in part, in Panama or transported through Panama, from being sold illegally within the jurisdiction of Panama to United States Government personnel or their dependents or from being transported, directly or indirectly, into the United States, and in preventing and punishing the laundering in that country of drug-related profits or drug-related monies.

2. Pursuant to section 802(a) of the Act (19 U.S.C. 2492(a)), I have decided to deny until further notice the preferential tariff treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) now being afforded to articles that are currently eligible for such treatment and that are imported from Panama.